AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF THE 2004 WEST SIDE WATER AND WASTEWATER EXPANSION PROJECT IN BRAZOS COUNTY, TEXAS

Texas Antiquities Permit Number 3367

by

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Brazos Valley Research Associates

Project Number 04-08

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ABSTRACT

An archaeological survey of a 3 mile (7.3 acres) water line in central Brazos County, Texas was conducted in March 2004 by Brazos Valley Research Associates (BVRA) of Bryan, Texas under Texas Antiquities Permit 3367. The Principal Investigator was William E. Moore, and the Project Archaeologist was Edward P. Baxter. No new archaeological sites were found in the project area, and it is recommended that the City of Bryan be allowed to proceed with construction as planned. Copies of the report are on file at the Texas Historical Commission (THC), Archeology Division; the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory (TARL); the City of Bryan; and BVRA. No artifacts were collected.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The contract for this project was awarded to BVRA by the City of Bryan. The cooperation of Graduate Civil Engineer Richard Reynosa throughout the project is appreciated. Mr. Reynosa provided maps and other logistical support. I am also grateful to Edward P. Baxter for his assistance in the field and with the preparation of the figures that appear in this report. Allegra Azulay, Records File Search Assistant at TARL, conducted the background check for previously recorded sites in the project area.

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INTRODUCTION

BVRA was retained by the City of Bryan to conduct an archaeological survey for the proposed 2004 West Side Water and Wastewater Expansion Project in central Brazos County (Figure 1). The project area is depicted on United States Geological Survey topographical maps Bryan West dated 1962 and photorevised 1980 (map number 3096-423) and Chances Store dated 1962 and photorevised 1980 (Map Number 3096-422) (Figure 2). The proposed water supply line is three miles in length with a permanent easement of 20 feet (7.3 acres). It begins at Leonard Road, turns south at Jones Road, turns southwest at Chick Lane, and terminates at Villa Maria Road. The line parallels a tributary of Thompsons Creek, a major stream in the county, which runs into the Brazos River. The size of the pipe is 24 inches, and it will be placed in a trench 36 inches wide with an average depth of 7 feet. Since the construction of this project is being financed by a local municipality, an Antiquities Permit was required, and permit number 3367 was issued. No federal agency is involved.

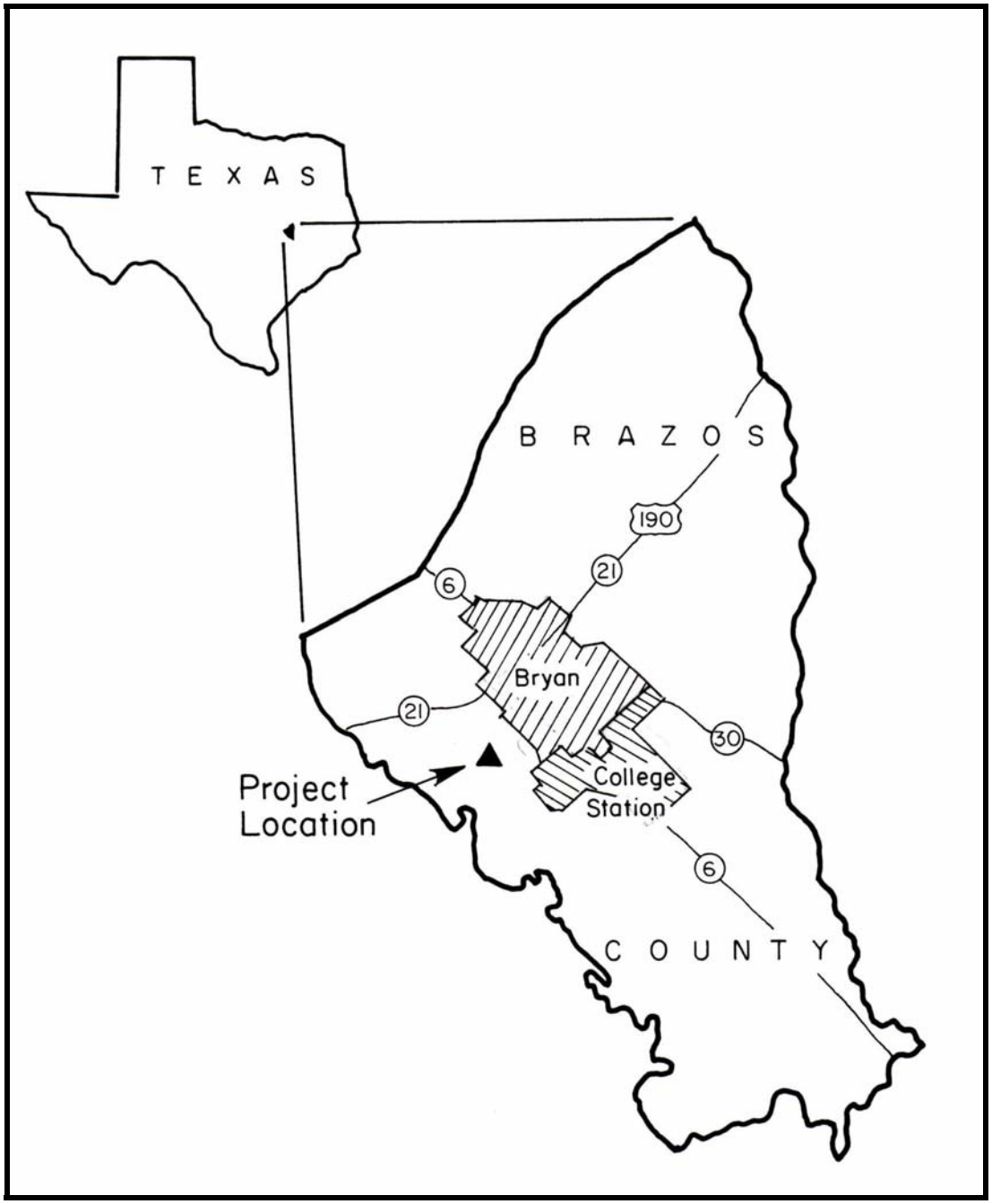

Figure 1. General Location Map

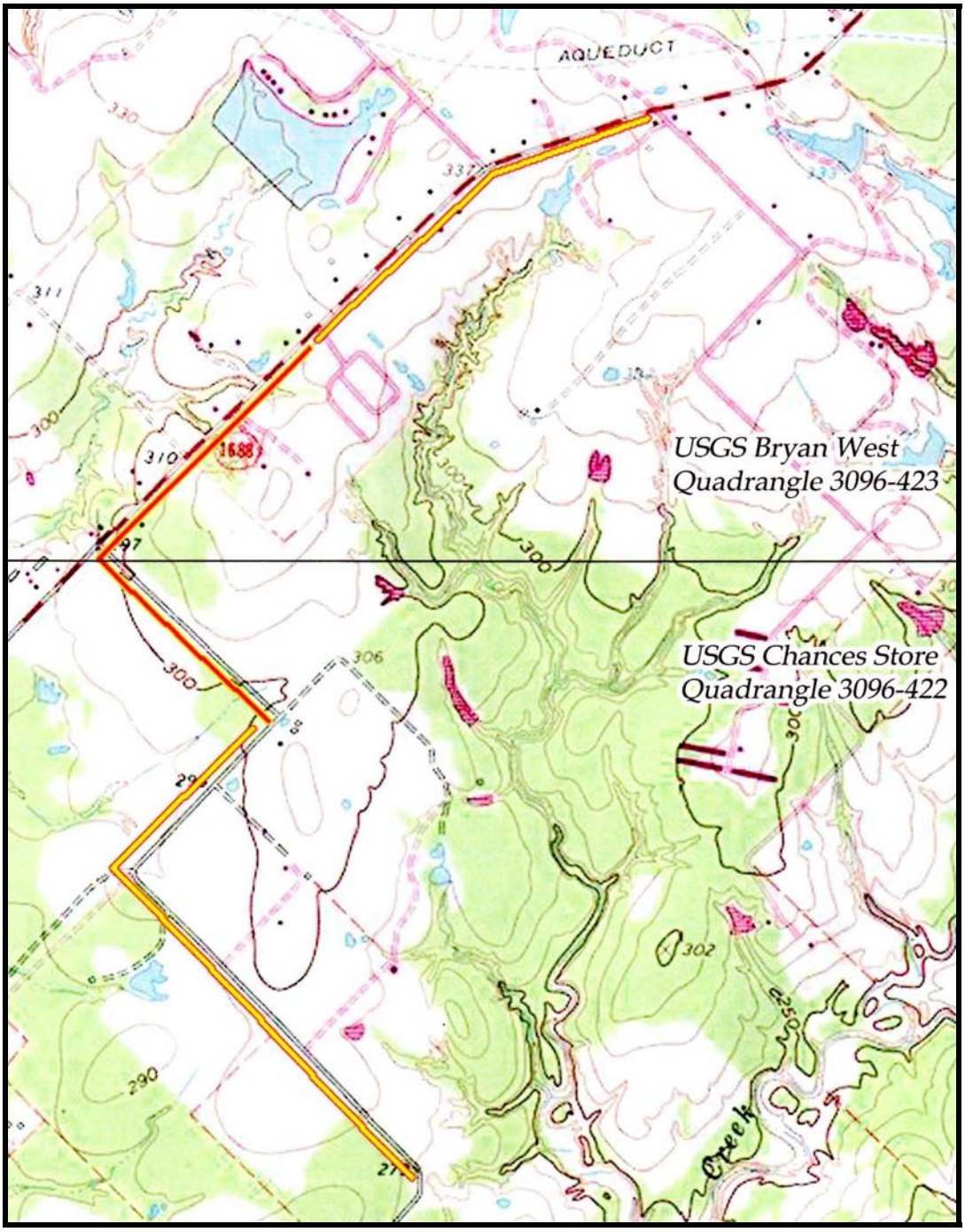

Figure 2. Project Area

(Project Area in yellow and area surveyed in red)

ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

According to a recently published planning document for the Eastern Planning Region of Texas (Kenmotsu and Perttula 1993:Figure 1.1.2), Brazos County is situated within the Southeast Texas archeological study region. In 1985, according to the planning document (Biesaart et al. 1985:114), Brazos County contained 33 recorded sites. In 1985, 0 sites in the county had been excavated, 0 had been tested by hand, and 33 had been surface collected. Two recorded prehistoric sites in the county were listed as Paleoindian, 1 was listed as General Archaic, and 1 was listed as Late Prehistoric (Biesaart et al. 1985:114). The archaeological potential of Brazos County is reflected in part by the increasing number of recorded sites found as a result of cultural resource management studies. As a result of these investigations, the number of recorded sites now stands at 157 (TARL site records). A check of the records at the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory in Austin, Texas revealed five archeological sites within one mile of the project area. Not one is within the path of the water supply line as currently proposed. The nearest previous investigation was an archaeological survey of a water supply line by BVRA in 2002. This study (Moore 2002) examined 17,000 feet along Leonard Road to Chick Lane and a 2000 foot segment on private land. No sites were found. Typically, archaeological sites in Brazos County are found on sandy hills overlooking creeks and rivers where water and other resources were available. Sites occur on first terraces and in upland settings. Deeply buried sites in the Brazos River alluvium have also been recorded.

It is beyond the scope of this report to discuss in detail the archaeological background of Brazos County, especially when numerous contract reports are available. The interested reader is referred to the statistical overview (Biesaart et al. 1985), the planning document published by the THC (Kenmotsu and Perttula 1993), and the in-depth report by Thoms (1993) for more detailed information regarding the archaeology of Brazos County.

METHODS

Prior to entering the field, a records check for previously recorded sites in the project area and vicinity was conducted. No previously recorded sites were found to be within the area to be surveyed. The project area was examined on March 3, 2004. Based on a review of the topographic maps, an area approximately one mile in length was selected for shovel testing. The field crew, consisting of the Principal Investigator (William E. Moore) and the Project Archaeologist (Edward P. Baxter). All exposed areas (10% to 40%) were surface inspected. The majority of the tests (n=19) were dug to clay, and the remaining test was terminated due to water-saturated soils. The size of each test was 30 centimeters in diameter, and they varied in depth from 10 to 50 centimeters below the existing ground surface. All excavated fill was screened through 1/4 inch hardware cloth. Data obtained from shovel testing were recorded on a shovel test log (Appendix I). In all, 20 shovel tests were dug (Figure 3), and each test was backfilled. Approximate locations of the shovel tests are depicted on the topographic maps in Figure 3.

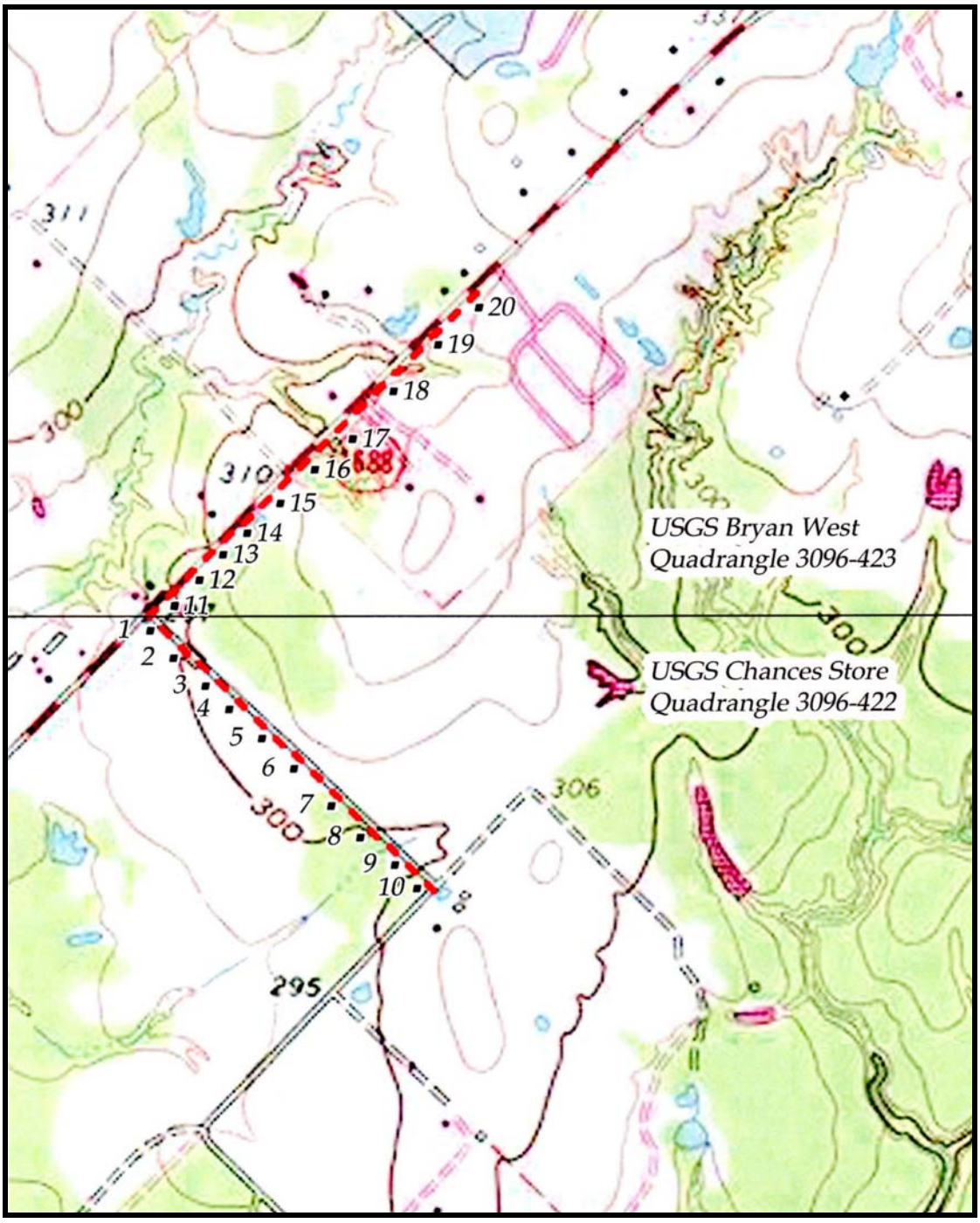

Figure 3. Shovel Test Locations

(Red dashed lines indicate are surveyed)

RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

No previously recorded archaeological sites were found to be within the path of the water supply as currently proposed by the City of Bryan. Overall, the project area traverses an area containing clay at or near the surface. At about 50 cm, the ground is extremely saturated with water. Strata of fine sandy loam without clay were not observed. These conditions indicate that this is an unlikely setting for prehistoric occupation with the exception of very transient or brief episodes. The few types of gravel observed were quite small and are not suitable resources for arrow or dart point manufacture. It is possible that sparse lithic scatters and procurement sites are present in the general area, but no evidence of these site types was observed. It is, therefore, concluded that the route of the water supply line does not pass through any prehistoric or historic sites.

The Archeological Survey Standards for Texas states that 16 shovel tests per mile are considered the minimum number for linear projects. Since only one mile was selected for survey, the 20 shovel tests excavated during this project meet these standards.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is my opinion that there are no significant archaeological sites within the route of the water supply line. Therefore, it is recommended that construction be allowed to proceed as planned. It is always possible that archaeological sites are missed during any cultural resources survey. Should any evidence of an archaeological site be encountered during construction of the proposed water supply line, work in the area of the find should cease until assessed by a professional archaeologist in consultation with the THC, BVRA, and the City of Bryan.

REFERENCES CITED

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APPENDIX I: SHOVEL TEST LOG*

Test	Depth	Comments
		Jones Road
01	30 cm	sandy clay over clay in a flat wooded area
02	20 cm	clay in a flat wooded area
03	50 cm	sandy clay over clay in a flat wooded area
04	40 cm	sandy clay over clay in a flat wooded area
05	40 cm	sandy clay over clay in a flat wooded area
06	30 cm	clay loam over clay on a gentle slope in a wooded area
07	50 cm	clay loam on a gentle slope; terminated due to water
08	10 cm	clay on the west side of a small stream
09	40 cm	sandy clay over clay on the east side of a small stream
10	40 cm	sandy clay over clay at the end high probability area on a rise above a small creek
		Leonard Road
11	10 cm	clay on a gentle slope
12	10 cm	clay on a gentle slope
13	20 cm	sandy clay over clay on a gentle slope
14	40 cm	sandy clay over clay on a gentle slope
15	40 cm	sandy clay over clay on a gentle slope
16	40 cm	sandy clay over clay on a gentle slope
17	30 cm	sandy clay over clay on a gentle slope

Test	Depth	Soil
18	50 cm	sandy clay over clay above a small drainage
19	40 cm	sandy clay over clay above a small drainage
20	50 cm	sandy clay over clay above a small drainage

* All tests negative